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HERBICIDE STUDIES OFFER GOOD NEWS

WASHINGTON—Some encouraging news has come from two studies of herbicide movement toward groundwater supplies on Texas' Blackland Prairie.

The studies—each looking at two commonly used herbicides—found the chemicals generally move no lower than 12 inches into the soil, well above underground water supplies, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have reported.

Also, at least 90 percent of the two herbicides were no longer detectable in the soil within 90 days of being applied, the scientists said.

Similar studies still need to be done on other herbicides commonly used on the heavy clay soils of the Blackland Prairie, said Rodney W. Bovey, one of the researchers in the first of the two studies.

The first study, conducted at Riesel, Texas, in 1988-89, looked at clopyralid (sold commercially as Reclaim), used to combat weeds and honey mesquite on rangeland, and picloram (sold commercially as Grazon PC), used against woody plants and broadleaf weeds in pastures and rangeland. The herbicides each were applied at half a pound per acre.

“Ninety days after treatment, more than 99 percent of the clopyralid and more than 92 percent of the picloram was gone,” said Bovey, a research agronomist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

During that 90-day period in 1988, the first year of the study, the area received 1.03 inches of rain; during the 90-day period the following year, 1.13 inches of rain fell in the area.

Most of the herbicides were detected in the upper 12 inches of soil, Bovey added.

Picloram will break down in sunlight, he said. In the study, both the clopyralid and picloram were worked into bare soil. One week after application, more than 48 percent of the clopyralid was already gone from the upper six inches of soil, and nearly 39 percent of the picloram was gone, even though it was somewhat protected by being incorporated into the soil.

When a field has vegetation, such as weeds, the long-term presence of these herbicides is even less, Bovey said: "Only a small percentage even hits the ground when you have vegetation."

In the second study, begun in 1990 at Riesel, researchers applied the herbicides atrazine and metolachlor in the springtime while planting grain sorghum. Atrazine is a commonly used herbicide against broadleaf weeds in corn and sorghum. Metolachlor is used against grasses in corn, soybeans and other crops.

"These compounds last longer in the soil before they break down, so there's more opportunity to move down through the soil toward groundwater," said Dennis W. Hoffman, a Texas Agricultural Experiment Station scientist working at ARS' Grassland, Soil and Water Research Laboratory at Temple, Texas, with research leader Clarence W. Richardson.

"We just do one application per year," Hoffman said. "We take soil samples before we apply the herbicides, immediately after we apply them, then every two weeks for about 30 days, and finally monthly." Soil samples go as deep as 36 inches.

The results so far are encouraging, Hoffman said.

"Essentially these don't move much in these heavy clay soils," he noted. "Rarely do we find anything deeper than a foot, and most are in the first six inches."

Hoffman said the study will continue for another year.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 504-9089

Issued: April 16, 1992

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USDA BEGINS SNAIL DRAGNET

WASHINGTON, April 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today it is investigating pet stores in 25 states for information on the whereabouts of exotic snails recently imported from Africa. The fist-sized snails, also known as *Archacatina marginata*, are voracious plant feeders and are prohibited from entry into the United States.

"The African snails were illegally imported from Lagos, Nigeria, by a broker through John F. Kennedy Airport in New York," said Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "The snail shipments were

apparently manifested as reptile shipments and were not inspected by APHIS agricultural inspectors.”

According to Lee, giant African snails are popular as terrarium pets and are sought after because of their large size. The snails have the ability to reproduce rapidly and are known to feed on virtually any plant material.

“Anyone with giant African snails in their possession should not turn them loose. Rather, they should turn them in,” said Lee. “Agricultural employees will assist individual owners in properly disposing of the snails. No fines will be assessed to cooperating individuals with snails in their possession.”

The snails were initially discovered by a Florida Department of Plant Industry inspector in a pet store in Tallahassee and subsequently seized. Florida pet stores received the snails from a distributor located near Tampa.

State and federal agricultural officials are researching pet store records to determine how many snails were imported into the United States and distributed.

A 1970s introduction of a similar giant African snail took nearly six years to eradicate. Eradication was accomplished in a large part through the cooperation of the public.

Anyone with information on the location of giant African snails or seeking information on proper disposal should contact a local USDA-APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine office, or one of the following regional and headquarters USDA-APHIS offices:

- Northeastern U.S. (609) 235-9120
- Southeastern U.S. (601) 863-1813
- Central U.S. (512) 548-2610
- Western U.S. (916) 551-3220
- APHIS Headquarters (301) 436-8295

Doug Hendrix (301) 436-7253

#

U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND IS ABOUT 1-PERCENT FOREIGN-OWNED

WASHINGTON, April 17—Foreign interests owned 14.8 million acres or slightly more than 1 percent of privately owned U.S. agricultural land as of Dec. 31, 1991, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Holdings have remained small and relatively steady from 1981 through 1991, fluctuating around 1 percent of privately owned agricultural land in the United States,” said John Lee, administrator of USDA’s Economic Research Service. “Foreign ownership increased 419,474 acres from a year earlier.”

About 53 percent of the reported foreign holdings is actually land owned by U.S. corporations. The law requires them to register their landholdings as foreign if as little as 10 percent of their stock is held by foreign investors. The remaining 47 percent of the foreign-held land is owned by investors not affiliated with U.S. firms.

Because of the corporate holdings, an increase in foreign ownership from one year to another does not necessarily represent land newly acquired by foreigners. Nor do the numbers necessarily represent ownership exclusively by foreigners.

A U.S. firm’s landholdings can show up as “foreign owned” one year, but not another, as the firm’s stock passes in and out of foreign hands. The land, however, is still owned by the same entity as before, according to Lee.

These and other findings are based on an analysis of reports submitted to USDA under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978. The analysis also revealed:

- Forest land accounts for 49 percent of all foreign-owned acreage; cropland, 17 percent; pasture and other agricultural land, 31 percent; and nonagricultural land, 3 percent.

- Corporations (U.S. and foreign) own 73 percent of the foreign-held acreage; partnerships, 19 percent; and individuals, 6 percent. The remaining 2 percent is held by estates, trusts, associations, institutions and others.

- Japanese investors own only 3 percent of the total foreign-held acreage, in contrast to 25 percent for Canadian investors, who lead. Investors (including individuals, corporations, partnerships, etc.) from Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands Antilles and Mexico own 73 percent of the foreign total.

—The largest foreign-owned acreage, mostly timberland, was reported in Maine. Foreign holdings account for 16 percent of Maine’s privately owned agricultural land. These holdings represent 19 percent of all the reported foreign-owned land nationwide. Four companies own 93 percent of the foreignheld acres in Maine, all in forest land. Two are Canadian, the third is a U.S. company that is partially Canadian-owned, and the fourth is a U.S. company that is partially French-owned.

—Except for Maine, foreign holdings are concentrated in the South (32 percent) and West (34 percent). Rhode Island and Alaska are the only states with no reported foreign-owned agricultural land.

—Ninety-four percent of the foreign-owned acreage will remain in agricultural production, according to the foreign owners.

Table 1—U.S. Agricultural Landholdings of Foreign Owners, by State, Dec. 31, 1991

State	Foreign- owned agricul- tural land	State	Foreign- owned agricul- tural land	State	Foreign- owned agricul- tural land
	<i>Acres</i>		<i>Acres</i>		<i>Acres</i>
Alabama	409,759	Louisiana	688,373	Oklahoma	53,795
Alaska	0	Maine	2,828,483	Oregon	746,285
Arizona	326,700	Maryland	52,186	Pennsylvania	56,824
Arkansas	188,329	Massachusetts	1,934	Puerto Rico	839
California	915,882	Michigan	203,588	R. Island	0
Colorado	584,455	Minnesota	220,775	S. Carolina	190,692
Connecticut	1,074	Mississippi	502,458	S. Dakota	42,882
Delaware	5,870	Missouri	82,195	Tennessee	174,298
Florida	562,039	Montana	555,651	Texas	1,078,999
Georgia	573,040	Nebraska	76,251	Utah	68,107
Guam	0	Nevada	179,912	Vermont	120,374
Hawaii	175,517	N. Hampshire	220,199	Virginia	117,063
Idaho	22,944	New Jersey	19,343	Washington	375,841
Illinois	185,062	New Mexico	926,014	W. Virginia	102,459
Indiana	79,713	New York	263,895	Wisconsin	23,467

Iowa	32,012	N. Carolina	229,659	Wyoming	170,896
Kansas	73,574	North Dakota	30,851		
Kentucky	93,226	Ohio	174,717	Total	14,808,501

Table 2—U.S. Agricultural Landholdings by Country of Foreign Owner, (Interests excluding U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders) December 31, 1991

Country	Acres	Country	Acres
		Lebanon	13,282
Argentina	13,394	Liberia	29,684
Australia	3,449	Liechtenstein	144,371
Austria	55,889	Luxembourg	3,976
Bahamas	33,746	Malaysia	7,948
Bahrain	553	Mexico	174,555
Barbados	117	Morocco	1,035
Belgium	63,368	Namibia	197
Belize	549	Netherlands	113,651
Bermuda	73,732	Netherlands Antilles	366,730
Bolivia	11	New Zealand	463
Brazil	5,262	Nicaragua	1,378
British Virgin Islands	69,961	Norway	5,547
Canada	1,970,717	Oman	454
Cayman Islands	23,224	Pakistan	2,171
Chile	1,556	Panama	168,015
China	496	Peru	278
Colombia	11,480	Philippines	3,863
Costa Rica	13,419	Poland	147
Cuba	20	Portugal	1,306
Czechoslovakia	485	St. Vincent	2,637
Denmark	9,682	Saudi Arabia	38,651
Dominican Republic	2,128	Singapore	528
Ecuador	976	Somalia	11
Egypt	2,134	South Africa	1,940
El Salvador	309	Southern Rhodesia	230
France	87,125	Spain	2,626

Gambia	294	Sweden	32,334
Germany	756,747	Switzerland	300,273
Greece	57,423	Syria	4,706
Guatemala	1,022	Taiwan	11,929
Guyana	35	Tanzania	10,143
Honduras	892	Thailand	252
Hong Kong	14,763	Trinidad & Tobago	131
Hungary	110	Turkey	558
India	1,687	Turks Islands	3,192
Indonesia	804	United Arab Emrates	3,810
Iran	2,623	United Kingdom	1,803,214
Ireland	10,705	Uruguay	10,807
Israel	1,067	U.S.S.R.	841
Italy	83,919	Venezuela	19,543
Ivory Coast	119	Vietnam	152
Jamaica	1,631	Yugoslavia	1,023
Japan	181,692		
Jordan	2,380		
Kampuchea	31	Multiple ¹	55,344
Korea (South)	1,536	Third tier ²	80,863
Kuwait	1,635		
Laos	31	Subtotal ³	6,989,717

Table 3—U.S. agricultural landholdings by country of foreign owner, (U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders) December 31, 1991

Country	Acres	Country	Acres
		US/Kuwait	7,561
US/Andorra	3,741	US/Lebanon	703
US/Argentina	4,255	US/Liberia	26,733
US/Australia	1,565	US/Libyan Arab Republic	280
US/Austria	19,886	US/Liechtenstein	52,250
US/Bahamas	72,085	US/Luxembourg	233,590
US/Barbados	41	US/Malaysia	300
US/Belgium	73,904	US/Mexico	322,583
US/Bermuda	38,633	US/Netherlands	315,556

US/Brazil	12,198	US/Netherlands Antilles	223,465
US/Brit. Virgin Islands	3,490	US/New Hebrides	2,991
US/Canada	1,690,906	US/New Zealand	47,010
US/Cayman Islands	10,748	US/Nicaragua	282
US/Chile	9,929	US/Norway	8,333
US/China	15,589	US/Panama	146,244
US/Colombia	10,154	US/Peru	100
US/Costa Rica	407	US/Philippines	7,793
US/Denmark	6,998	US/Portugal	1,683
US/Ecuador	1,632	US/Quatar	219
US/Egypt	1,963	US/Saudi Arabia	21,117
US/El Salvador	533	US/South Africa	4,404
US/Finland	2,369	US/Spain	4,574
US/France	1,019,520	US/Sweden	6,172
US/Germany	444,852	US/Switzerland	333,409
US/Greece	5,249	US/Taiwan	10,995
US/Guatemala	412	US/Thailand	252
US/Guyana	334	US/Trinidad & Tobago	20
US/Honduras	37	US/Turkey	443
US/Hong Kong	131,379	US/United Arab Emirates	2,107
US/Indonesia	544	US/United Kingdom	1,326,892
US/Iran	1,967	US/Uruguay	618
US/Iraq	800	US/Venezuela	38,069
US/Ireland	4,608	US/Multiple	180,278
US/Italy	21,646	US/Third Tier	610,896
US/Japan	268,367	Subtotal ⁴	7,818,784
US/Kenya	32		
US/Korea (South)	85	Total all landholdings	14,808,501

¹A report is processed as “multiple” when no single country predominates--for example, an equal partnership between a Canadian and a German.

²A report is processed as “third tier” if three or more levels of ownership are reported with no foreign interests indicated.

³Total interests excluding U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

⁴Total interest of U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

J. Peter DeBraal (202) 219-0425

#

USDA PROPOSES FEES FOR CLASSING 1992 COTTON CROP

WASHINGTON, April 17—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service is proposing to raise cotton classing fees charged to cotton growers and fees charged to the cotton industry for other related services.

The proposed grower-fee increase is necessary to continue providing cotton classing services at the current level.

Under the proposal, grower-fee classification services would be \$1.92 per bale, an increase of 19 cents from last year. Grower fees have remained at \$1.73 per bale since 1989.

The five-cents-per-bale discount offered to producer-agents who voluntarily provide centralized billing and collection services will remain unchanged.

Classing fees are set by a formula stipulated in the Uniform Cotton Classing Fees Act of 1987. Elements of the formula are estimated volume of classing, the rate of inflation and the operating reserve fund of AMS's Cotton Division.

USDA is proposing certain other fee increases for other cotton classification, fiber testing services and for practical forms of cotton standards. These increases are necessary because of higher costs for rent, utilities and mandated salary increases. The fees charged must reflect the full cost to AMS of providing the services.

The proposed fees will be published in the April 21 Federal Register. Comments postmarked no later than May 8 should be sent to Lee Cliburn, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2641-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the Federal Register notice are available from that office, telephone (202) 720-3193.

Alicia Ford, (202) 720-8998.

#

MADIGAN NAMES MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES TO NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

WASHINGTON, April 17—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced the appointment of six members and seven alternates to three-year terms on the 13-member National Honey Board.

Board members are appointed to represent seven regions throughout the country for three-year terms. Producers, handlers, importers, marketing cooperatives and the public are represented on the board.

The newly appointed members and their alternates, listed by region, are: Region 1—E. Randall Johnson, Nampa, Idaho, and alternate Marjorie Ehry, Dundee, Ore.;

Region 2—Larry Krause, Riverton, Wyo., and alternate Barbara M. Stockwell, Arivaca, Ariz.;

Region 3—John Ross Miller, Gackle, N.D., and alternate JoAnne King, Marion, N.D.; and

Region 4—Stephen M. Klein (reappointed), Marshall, Minn., and his new alternate Donald Folkema, Fremont, Mich.

Madigan named Robert G. Appel, Manville, Ill., to the handler 2 position. David F. McLure, Littleton, N.H., is his alternate.

Appointed as alternate to the marketing cooperative position is Dewey B. Robson, Carrington, N.D.

Appointed to serve as public member is Leslie L. Kuenzi, Portland, Ore., and alternate Kelly J. Duffin-Maxwell, Glenview, Ill.

Appointees will be installed June 27 at the board's annual meeting. Their three-year terms of office will end March 31, 1995, except for the public member and alternate appointments which will end March 31, 1993.

The National Honey Board administers provisions of the 1986 National Honey Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Order, which authorizes development of programs to improve the position of honey in the marketplace. The honey board administers an industry-funded national research, promotion and consumer information program to increase domestic honey consumption and U.S. honey exports.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors operations of the board.

Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998

#

USDA PROPOSES TO ALLOW NICARAGUA TO EXPORT MEAT PRODUCTS TO THE U.S.

WASHINGTON, April 17—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to restore Nicaragua to the list of countries eligible to export meat products into the United States, a USDA official announced today.

Dr. Donald L. White, associate administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, said Nicaragua requested relistment as an eligible country in April 1990. "Since then, we have conducted a thorough review of the country's inspection system and believe it to be at least equal to the U.S. system," he said.

If eligibility is restored, Nicaragua would export an estimated 23.3 million pounds of beef products to the United States. This amount represents about 0.06 percent of the total U.S. meat production, and would have little if any impact on domestic producers, White said.

The United States removed Nicaragua from the list in 1989 because FSIS representatives were unable to make required on-site reviews of the country's meat inspection system since their personal safety could not be assured.

USDA conducts such reviews in countries eligible to export meat to the United States to ensure their inspection systems meet appropriate standards, which by law must be at least equal to U.S. meat inspection standards. If current information about a country's meat inspection system cannot be obtained, USDA has the authority to withdraw that country's eligibility to export products to the United States.

The proposal was published April 15 in the Federal Register. Comments should be sent by May 15 to the Policy Office, Attention: Linda Carey, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Room 3171-South, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FSIS and its 9,000 employees are dedicated to ensuring that meat and poultry are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 720-0314

#

USDA PLANS ADDITIONAL PORK PURCHASES TO OFFSET LOW MARKET PRICES

WASHINGTON, April 20—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture will reopen its pork purchase program with significant additional purchases this spring.

The additional purchases are an effort to assist pork producers in a period of continued large hog marketings and low market prices.

Madigan said current low hog prices are the result of higher production this year—nine percent larger than the average for the last five years.

“With pork at bargain prices, this is an ideal time to buy more of it for distribution under the school lunch program next school year,” Madigan said. “We’ll be buying canned pork and frozen hams for shipment to schools starting in July.”

The pork and hams will be bought under Section 32 of Public Law 74-320, which authorizes federal purchases of commodities in oversupply for donation to schools, institutions and other eligible food programs. A similar action was last taken in April 1989. Section 32 purchases are funded from customs receipts.

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service will mail details of the purchase program to the pork industry this week.

For details about the pork purchase, including bidding procedures, contact Barbara L. Cope, contracting officer, USDA, AMS, Livestock and Seed Division, Room 2610-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-2650.

Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998

#

USDA “EARTH TEAM” VOLUNTEERS SET RECORD FOR HOURS WORKED

WASHINGTON, April 21—More than 8,500 volunteers on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Earth Team contributed a record 388,000 hours toward soil and water conservation efforts nationwide during 1991, according to USDA’s Soil Conservation Service Chief William Richards.

“Nearly 80,000 more hours were volunteered in 1991 than in 1990,” said Richards. “Volunteers are helping to conserve our resources, and

schools and community groups benefit from the conservation tours and exhibits the team organizes.”

In 1991, Earth Team workers volunteered an average of 46 hours each compared to 32 hours each in 1990. The number of volunteer hours increased 26 percent.

Richards said volunteers have assisted SCS in meeting increased demands as a result of the conservation compliance provision of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills. Under that provision, farmers and ranchers have fully implemented plans on about half of the 135 million acres of highly erodible cropland and must have all plans implemented by Dec. 31, 1994.

Earth Team volunteers work with SCS staff on conservation activities in their communities. Technical assistance is needed to plan, lay out and design conservation practices; to make natural resource inventories; and to improve wildlife habitat.

“Anyone interested in conserving natural resources can join the Earth Team,” Richards said. “You can work part time or full time, outdoors or in a local SCS office. It’s a great way to learn new job skills and help the environment.”

Volunteers need to be at least 16 years old. Individuals wishing to volunteer for the Earth Team may call their local SCS office or 1-800-THE SOIL. Their interest and skills will be matched with the projects that need to be done locally.

Leslie Wilder (202) 720-2472

#

NICKEL ESSENTIAL FOR PLANT GROWTH

WASHINGTON, April 21—Plants must have nickel to complete their life cycle, produce viable seed or make maximum use of other elements such as iron, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist reported.

Plant physiologist Ross M. Welch said these findings have made nickel the first element accepted as essential for all plants since the recognition of chlorine in 1954.

Welch said one of nickel’s most important roles is its effect on efficient use of urea fertilizer by plants such as tomatoes and legumes.

“Nickel is part of an enzyme called urease, and urease breaks down urea so the plant can use the nitrogen in the urea,” Welch explained.

“Research has shown that soybeans, peas, cowpeas, tomatoes, rice, tobacco and duckweed required nickel when the plants were grown with only urea as the nitrogen source,” he said. “The nitrogen in the urea could only be used when these plants contained active urease, and that required the presence of nickel.”

When nickel is absent, urea can build up in the plant’s leaf tips to levels harmful to the plant, said Welch. “The plant won’t be very productive,” he said. “Any seed that’s produced won’t germinate.”

Nickel also appears to play an important role in the absorption of iron by plant roots.

“Without adequate nickel, cereals can’t absorb adequate levels of iron and become iron-deficient,” he said. “Without adequate iron, the plant can’t perform photosynthesis and can die.”

Scientists have known for more than a decade that nickel is essential to the well-being of animals, and that mice deficient in nickel cannot absorb iron efficiently.

Welch said he and colleagues at the U.S. Plant, Soil and Nutrition Laboratory at Ithaca, N.Y., reported on the essential role of nickel for legumes in 1982, but those findings have only recently gained general acceptance.

At the Ithaca lab, Welch and fellow scientists with USDA’s Agricultural Research Service pinpointed nickel’s role in grain production by growing barley plants in nutrient solutions that contained no added nickel. The barley plants did not produce grain capable of germinating.

However, when adequate levels of nickel were provided to the barley plants, the seed they produced were viable. Further studies showed wheat and oats were similarly impaired by lack of nickel.

“Nickel seems to be everywhere, so this might not seem like a big problem in the field,” said Welch.

“But we should remember that when another micronutrient, molybdenum, was reported as essential in the 1930s, the findings were thought to be interesting,” he said, “but since it’s needed in such low levels, no one thought field situations could be found that would be deficient in molybdenum.”

Within a few years after the discovery of the significance of molybdenum, fields of subterranean clover in Australia were found to be molybdenum-deficient, he said. “Now a few ounces of molybdenum per acre have made millions of acres of land in Australia productive.

“So if history is any guide, there will be someplace in the world where our discoveries about nickel will be applicable—areas where the soil is deficient in nickel, so applications of urea fertilizer are going to be very inefficient unless you correct the nickel deficiency.”

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 504-9089

#

CROSS NAMES MEMBERS OF BEEF PLANT REVIEW TEAM

WASHINGTON, April 21—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s top food safety official today named a team of scientists to evaluate the effectiveness of new streamlined inspection procedures being tested on a pilot basis at five U.S. cattle slaughter plants.

Dr. H. Russell Cross, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, said the 10-member team will assess procedures and products at the pilot plants to determine whether beef produced under the Streamlined Inspection System (SIS) is as safe as that produced under traditional inspection procedures.

The assessment was ordered by Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan on March 11.

“Our number one priority is public health protection through an inspection program to ensure meat and poultry are safe and wholesome,” said Cross. “We are pleased to have such an outstanding team of experts to compare our pilot streamlined inspection program with our traditional inspection of beef plants.”

Team members have expertise in public health, microbiology, food technology, animal science, veterinary medicine and quality control.

Beginning in May, the team will visit the five pilot plants and three other plants using traditional inspection methods.

“We hope the team will confirm the National Academy of Sciences’ determination that beef from SIS pilot plants is as safe as beef produced under traditional inspection,” Cross said.

The team will inspect carcasses for physical signs of disease; observe and assess slaughter processes, including viscera and carcass examination; and assess the safety and wholesomeness of finished products. It also will check plant and FSIS quality control systems and records.

A team report is due to Madigan in July.

The ten team members are: Dr. Phillip Alm, former chief, U.S. Army

Food Inspection Service; Dr. David P. Anderson, dean of the University of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Frank Busta, professor and chairman of the University of Minnesota's food science and nutrition department; Dr. Frank Bryan, a microbiologist formerly with the Centers for Disease Control; Dr. Graham Clarke, chief, National Programs, Meat and Poultry Products, Agriculture Canada, (Canada's Department of Agriculture); Dr. Norman Heidelbaugh, professor, Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. James E. Marion, dean of Auburn University's College of Agriculture; Dr. John McAnelly, former vice president for quality control, RJR/Nabisco; Dr. George Morris, a microbiologist formerly with the Centers for Disease Control; and Dr. Lowell Walters, an animal scientist and professor emeritus at Oklahoma State University.

The five SIS pilot programs were established between 1984 and 1987 at Excel Corporation plants in Plainview and Friona, Texas; ConAgra plants in Grand Island, Neb., and Greeley, Colo.; and at the National Beef plant in Liberal, Kan.

The Streamlined Inspection System reduces the amount of time federal inspectors spend on routine tasks not related to public health, Cross said. FSIS originally had proposed to implement the system nationwide by 1988, but suspended this plan after review of 350 public comments on the proposal and after an NAS study recommended modifications of the pilot SIS projects.

The NAS also recommended FSIS obtain definitive microbiological data to confirm effectiveness of meat inspection systems in protecting public health. In accord with this recommendation, Madigan and Cross recently announced a nationwide microbiological survey of plants producing 99 percent of the nation's steer and heifer beef. This survey, which is scheduled to begin in the next few months, will provide a scientifically valid microbiological database for use in further evaluations of the microbiological safety of slaughter plant operations and inspection procedures.

Jim Greene (202) 720-0314

#

USDA TO OPEN AGRICULTURAL TRADE OFFICE IN OSAKA, JAPAN

WASHINGTON, April 21—A new U.S. agricultural trade office will open in Osaka, Japan, April 22, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced today.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service is opening the office to help U.S. exporters tap into the growing Japanese market, according to Madigan. "Although Japan is American agriculture's biggest overseas market, accounting for nearly a fourth of total agricultural and forestry exports, the potential for even bigger export sales is enormous," Madigan said.

The United States sold a total of \$7.7 billion of agricultural goods in world markets in fiscal 1991, placing it first in the agricultural export sweepstakes. Canada ranked second at \$4.6 billion.

"Osaka is the economic and commercial heart of western Japan, which by itself has an economy that is larger than that of Canada or South Korea," Madigan said. "Opening a new agricultural trade office in Osaka is tantamount to extending our U.S. agricultural marketing efforts to the seventh most economically powerful country in the world."

The Osaka opening brings to 14 the number of trade offices operated by FAS. These offices are centers for U.S. export sales promotions and contact points for importers seeking to buy agricultural products from the United States. Offices are located in major markets in Europe, South America, Africa, Asia (including Tokyo) and the Middle East.

The new office is located at Shima Office Bldg., 3F, 1-18, Kitahama 3-Chome, Chuo-Ku, Osaka 541. The mailing address is Agricultural Consulate General, ATO, Unit 45004, Box 239, APO AP 96337-0002; telephone, (011-81-6) 208-0303; facsimile, (011-81-6) 208-0306. The agricultural trade officer is Geoffrey Wiggin.

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USDA STARTS TESTS ON NATURAL ENEMIES OF GRAIN PESTS

WASHINGTON—Once banned from stored grain, the Warehouse Pirate Bug has been pardoned by the federal government.

Pirate Bugs are “fierce” predators of insect pests that infest grain, says U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist John H. Brower. They feed on insects and do not eat grain.

But these bugs and other predators and parasitic insects formerly could not be used in grain warehouses to combat grain pests. A change in the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act has lifted the ban.

That means new tests will be started on the Pirate Bug and other beneficial insects, in their new life as natural controls against stored grain pests.

Brower, who has studied natural enemies of stored grain pests for 13 years, says the Pirate Bug (*Xylocoris flavipes*) has a voracious appetite for grain-damaging pests. “It eats eggs and larvae of grain pests and will attack any insect it can catch and subdue,” says Brower, an entomologist with USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. He is based at the agency’s Stored-Product Insect Research and Development Laboratory in Savannah, Ga.

“ARS will begin pilot tests this spring at its laboratories in Georgia, New York, Kansas, and Texas, on releasing parasites and predators in stored corn, wheat and rice,” says Kenneth W. Vick, ARS national program leader for product losses and quarantine. Parasitic insects attack pests found inside and outside grain kernels, while predators attack those outside kernels.

“We will test the effectiveness of various combinations of parasites and predators to determine which give the best control for specific commodities and storage conditions,” Vick said.

Vick stressed the safe use of these insects, as alternatives to fumigants and chemical sprays that have been commonly used to kill insect pests that infest stored grain. “In all cases, the beneficial insects die after they run out of grain pests as food and are easily removed from storage facilities.”

Vick said standard practice for grain milling operators is routine cleaning of foreign debris from grain before it is converted into flour and other products.

Vick said the pilot tests will zero in on major stored grain pests,

ncluding the maize weevil (*Sitophilus zeamais*), rice weevil (*S. oryzae*) and lesser grain borer (*Rhyzopertha dominica*).

Brower and fellow entomologist Richard T. Arbogast, who have studied all three pests, said parasites may be the best means of control.

One parasite, the female *Anisopteromalus* wasp, controls weevils in wheat by crawling through grain until it finds an infested kernel, Brower said. After drilling a hole in the kernel, the wasp lays an egg that hatches on the outside of the larva and feeds on the larva's body fluid.

Brower said the wasp completely consumes the larva within a week. He said such parasitic insects are very efficient at finding grain pests, even when the pests are present in small numbers. "Every one they find, they destroy," he said.

"A good one-two-punch for control involves using predatory insects like the Warehouse Pirate Bug to come in and clean up the grain bin before harvest," Brower said. Released in empty grain bins, the predators search out and destroy pests hiding in nooks and crannies, he said.

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